

Kalamazoo

BALANCED AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Network

March 28, 2007

TO: Michigan House of Representatives, Judiciary Committee
RE: HB 4525, 4526, 4527, 4528

The Kalamazoo Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) Network urges you to move these Bills out of Committee and into the House for debate.

If enacted, this legislation will simplify the process for incarcerated offenders to receive legal identification materials upon their release from prison and will support them in their efforts to reintegrate peacefully to our local communities.

Currently, ex-offenders often take weeks or months to achieve the documentation necessary to get a job, establish credit or a bank account, to obtain a driving license, or even to go back to school. Each one of these activities is necessary to ensure that they will be able to resume life in a lawful manner, reintegrate with their families, and not re-offend.

The State of Michigan departments continuously enact policies that don not just make it difficult but in fact make it impossible for offenders to "pay their debt to society," and fulfill their goal of living a meaningful life.

For their sake, for the sake of those who love them who are also being punished and even moreso, for the sake of the Michigan economy, please pass this legislation out of committee.

joe schmitt, Chair
Kalamazoo BARJ Network
(and 25 other BARJ Network participants)

Dale Anderson, WMU Campus Employee Dispute Resolution Services
Program

Sherry Brockway, YWCA;

Barry Burnside, Community Dispute Resolution Services

Felix Brooks, 9th Circuit Court Youth Offender Transitions Program

Paul Clements, Western Michigan University

Steve Cloman, Field Services, 9th Circuit Court, Family Division

Rev. Don DeYoung, Reformed Church in Michigan;

Karen Duckworth, Mothers Against Drunk Driving

Jeff Fink, Kalamazoo County Prosecuting Attorney;

Robert Hamet, Kalamazoo Regional Educational Services Agency

Denise Hartsough, Greater Kalamazoo United Way;
Juanita Holley, 60th Michigan House District Services Office;
Janet Jones, Strong Families/Safe Children
Cathy Kothari, NIJ Intimate Partner Violence Prosecution Research
Project
Ron Kramer, Criminal Justice Program, Western Michigan University
Jackie Mitchell, Kalamazoo Community Mental Health
Mary Anne Munley, Compassionate Friends
Tom Noblett, ICAN Day Treatment Program, Juvenile Home;
Kay Perry, Michigan CURE
joe schmitt, Catholic Diocese of Kalamazoo;
Charles Spence, Kalamazoo Community Mental Health Services Regional
Coordinating Agency (Substance Abuse)
Frank Weichlein, Kalamazoo County Juvenile Home
Rev. Milton Wells, Michigan Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative
Chuck Wilson, United Methodist Church
Doug Wood, Kalamazoo Public Schools
Thell Woods, Synco Intermediary Services